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ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING

By FOWLER MANNING

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Elements of Effective Advertising

By
FOWLER MANNING
General Sales Manager,
Winchester Repeating Arms Company

This Lecture, to be read in connection with Volume 13, forms part of READING ASSIGNMENT 25

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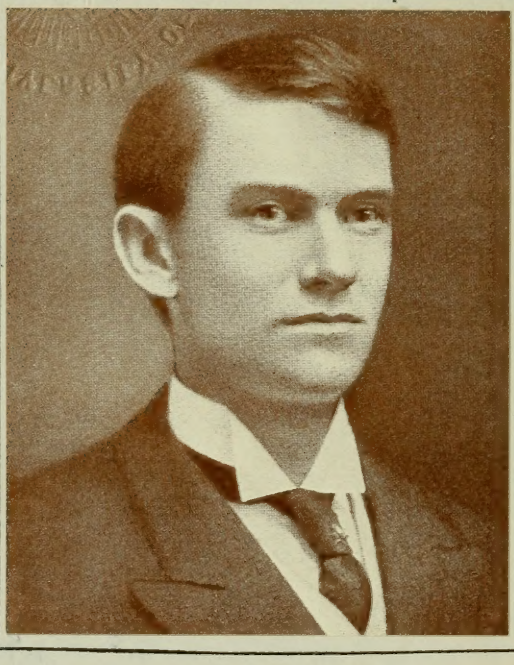

FOWLER MANNING

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Fowler Manning was born in Texas with the proverbial "silver spoon in his mouth," but the panic of '95 removed the spoon. To earn a livelihood he left college and went to work. Believing that selling was the big thing in business, he resolved that a broad experience in selling should be his first objective.

He at once began to acquire experiences in retail and wholesale establishments and subsequently went "on the road" for a jobbing house.

As a traveling salesman, Mr. Manning became convinced that the road salesman's greatest handicap generally is bad house management of sales. He also came to the conclusion that factory lines offered the salesman greater money-making opportunities than jobbing lines.

Having decided that he was going to be a sales manager instead of a salesman and firmly believing that organized selling was rapidly becoming a most powerful factor in business, he left the road to join the *inside* sales organization of the Meyer Brothers' Drug Company, St. Louis, with a view to securing an insight into the methods employed in the sales management of a large successful business.

At the age of twenty-two Mr. Manning became sales manager of a house doing about one million dollars business a year. After reorganizing the sales methods, he increased the sales in one year thirty-eight per cent and the profits about an equal amount.

Encouraged by his success, Mr. Manning decided to specialize in sales organization and sales reorganization and to broaden still further his experience in connection with specialty lines. About this time he took up a study of advertising in its relation to sales management and ever since has made sales operations and organizations involving advertising his special work.

NOTE:—This Lecture, which is based upon the author's ripe experience in his special field, should be read in the light of the Modern Business Text, and should be studied as an authoritative message from the field of present-day business activity.

Elements of Effective Advertising

By

FOWLER MANNING

One of the first questions an advertising manager asks himself as he contemplates enlarged advertising operations is: "How can I bring the influence of my advertising to bear upon the volume of current sales, in the immediate future?" But that is simply another way of asking: "What are the elements of an effective advertising campaign?"

The obvious answer to this question is that the campaign should be planned from beginning to end, so as to provide for every contingency that may arise, and so as to eliminate in advance every obstacle to the rapid progress of its operations. In marketing a product, as in manufacturing it, there is likely to be considerable lost motion or duplication of effort. This must be removed if either operation is to approach a 100% efficiency standard.

Account, however, must always be taken of conditions as they are. If response to advertising is obtained more quickly in one sales territory than in another, there may be perfectly good and natural reasons for such difference. When a snowfall takes place in the mountains, the white covering is distributed over hill and valley, over slope and plain, at about the same time. But when the snow

begins to melt, evidence of that fact is not equally noticeable everywhere at the same time. In certain parts of the water shed, the melting snow rapidly finds its way into the watercourses; in other parts, the flow of water is slower in reaching these channels, while in still other parts the movement is imperceptible.

Now, your advertising is the snow. It falls fairly evenly over a large territory—the water sheds; your sales channels are the watercourses. From some parts of your territory there is an instant increase in the flow of sales; from other parts the flow is considerably less, and from still others there is no perceptible increase in the flow. If it were possible to increase the number of your watercourses, or to widen and deepen those already existing, a more rapid conversion of the snow upon the watersheds into water in your channels—that is, increase in your volume of sales—would be the result.

Relation of Advertising to Selling

But right here a distinction should be made. Everybody knows that advertising is a sales force, and that its function is to create or increase the demand for a product. As such, therefore, it is usually considered a preliminary to sales. In a general way this is true; yet it does not follow that in every instance advertising precedes selling. In fact, whenever it does so on any large scale, the result is likely to be disappointing to the advertiser.

In some respects, advertising is largely an effort to safeguard—or clinch—sales that have already been made. That applies both to dealer and consumer.

After all, the manufacturer is marketing his product to the consumer, that is, to the public. The dealers to whom he sells are merely links in the chain of distribution, or, perhaps better, channels thru which the product travels on its way from producer to consumer. Since, however, these links or channels are not owned by the manufacturer, he cannot command their functions as tho they were impersonal entities. It follows that they may, if they choose, offer considerable resistance to the even flow of his goods. Sometimes this restriction takes the form of direct opposition. At other times, and generally, it is merely inertia on the dealers' part. In either case, however, your task as a director of effective advertising is to reduce the resistance to the lowest possible point.

Now, it is easily possible—in fact the thing has often been done—by means of strong sales efforts directed toward local dealers, to raise the sales volume to a point greatly in excess of the existing consumer demand. But to do so, keeping in mind our illustration, is not to prepare the channel for a freer flow, but to choke it with goods for which there is no outlet.

It is also possible—and this is an even more frequent occurrence—to increase by means of advertising the consumer demand for the goods

before the dealers have been sufficiently stocked to take care of such demand. Here, to revert to our figure, tho the outlet is wide open, the channel is empty of goods. Both courses are bad and can result only from overlooking in the beginning the essential elements of an effective advertising campaign.

Some time ago a manufacturer of a food specialty approached a certain Chicago daily newspaper noted for its painstaking survey of local markets, with a proposition for taking advertising space for a certain period, the object being to create consumer demand. The paper, after making an investigation, declined the advertising on the ground that the advertiser had not established distribution to take care of the consumer demand to be created by means of the proposed advertising. The incident illustrates not only the progressive spirit and sound judgment of the newspaper in question, but also the absence of understanding on the part of some manufacturers.

Two Sets of Facts

From the foregoing, it is readily seen that the manufacturer has at least two sets of facts to reckon with in planning his campaign. First, those facts which relate to the consumer, and second, those which have to do with the dealer. These two persons, the consumer and the dealer, are interested in the product for entirely different reasons. The

former wants to know whether the product will satisfy some want on his part. He is interested in learning what benefits the possession of the product will confer upon him. The latter, that is the dealer, cares for none of these things. His concern is to know whether the sale of the goods in his store is likely to put any considerable amount of money in his till. The line of appeal, therefore, to these two persons is necessarily different also. In the one case, it may be an appeal to pride, thrift, economy, comfort, vanity, etc. This may involve a full explanation of the uses of the product and their value in such a manner as to create an interest in it and a desire to possess it. Not the least important item to be given attention in that connection is information as to where the goods may be obtained.

In the case of the dealer the appeal is mainly to his desire for gain—the profit from resale, tho it may also be to his ambition for leadership and his appreciation of the advantages that will come to him thru his association with the manufacturer in the distribution of a desirable product.

The Campaign

But while the process of advertising to the consumer and that of selling to the dealer thus are seen to be different, it is nevertheless a fact that these processes are reciprocal. Advertising and selling are correlatives. Each is necessary to the

success of the other. It is therefore important that in formulating a marketing plan, care should be taken to give to each of these the maximum amount of benefit thru its association with the other. Hence we have the "campaign."

The interplay or reaction upon each other of selling and advertising is aptly illustrated by the sales plan adopted by a large and well-known tobacco company. This company markets several brands of cigars, cigarettes and tobacco. Instead, however, of doing as is usually done by manufacturers, namely, letting each salesman carry the company's entire line, this tobacco company divides its products among salesmen operating in the same territory and lets them compete with one another for business, each man working for his special line and therefore against the competing products of his own company. A salesman carries only one brand of cigars, cigarettes and tobacco. There is a price difference in the goods and presumably a larger margin of profit on the sale of the higher-priced brand; nevertheless the salesman who carries the cheaper brand is not only encouraged to "cut out" the other brand wherever he can, but is held responsible for maintaining or increasing his quota of sales. Both brands are liberally supported by advertising, and both are sold to dealers on the strength of the consumer demand created by the advertising. The plan is said to work to the entire satisfaction of its originator.

When we speak of a "sales campaign," we usu-

ally have in mind this composite selling effort, conducted over a relatively definite period of time. In planning the campaign we must first of all see that the advertising is so placed that it will reach the right public—that is the class of people to whom the goods are believed to appeal. We must also see to it that this advertising is of such a character and volume that it duly impresses the local dealer. Our big selling problem consists in having our goods placed where they can be conveniently purchased by the consumer and where the quantity bought by the dealer is sufficient to make him exert himself to push the goods and thereby harness to his own business the benefit of the manufacturer's advertising.

Preliminary Steps

To do all this, and to protect our advertising expenditure, selling must precede advertising. Before we begin to spend our appropriation, we want to know that we have the necessary distribution. We want to be able to check up and to demonstrate the existence of such distribution. We want, too, to develop a stock pressure on the dealer's part by inducing him to stock enough of the product to give him a money interest in the outcome of the campaign. For, obviously, the dealer who has on his hands a sizable stock will exert himself more in the sale of the goods than the dealer who has just a small stock.

We should also endeavor, as far as possible, to secure the full advertising value from our distribution by inducing the largest number of dealers (where such a plan is practicable) to carry our goods. Frequently it is possible for the manufacturer's salesmen to stock an unwilling dealer by showing him that one or more neighboring dealers already have been sold repeatedly. Under the circumstances the dealer finds himself almost forced to come in as a self-protecting measure, since otherwise all local sales resulting from the manufacturer's advertising would go to his competitors.

The argument of increased distribution is generally a strong confidence-stimulus to the trade. It is a visible demonstration of initial sales success.

In planning an advertising campaign it is important that we find a rapid means of creating confidence in our product and in our selling plans on the part of the dealers. Nothing will do that so well as a demonstration of the prompt and certain salability of the goods. Not merely that the goods are inherently good, but that the plan mapped out will actually move the goods from the dealer's shelves. To this end, it is always wise for a manufacturer to take the dealer into his confidence, and to show him the whole plan with full explanation of each step. Let him see, not only what kind of advertising is to be done, but also how much of it will be used, as well as when and where it will be used. The value of this procedure is that it enables the dealer to stock the goods upon his own judg-

ment as to the demand that will be created for it by the advertising which he has seen, and which he therefore knows and understands.

Usual Dealer-Attitude

The average retailer is "from Missouri" when the subject of stocking the product on the strength of a future advertising campaign is suggested to him. "Show me the demand," he says, "and I'll stock your goods, but not until then. I've been there!"

This attitude is not altogether unreasonable, especially in view of the many "flash" campaigns that have been conducted by certain advertisers, both large and small. It is evident that a campaign designed merely to "make a show" and not to build permanent business, is rarely profitable to the dealer who has stocked the goods in anticipation of a steady demand. Such dealer is likely to view with marked coldness if not with actual suspicion every new product presented to him. He is not willing to buy until the growing consumer demand forces him to do so.

Necessarily, such dealer-attitude greatly hampers and retards distribution and thereby lessens sales, so that the result of the campaign on that account is in danger of proving a failure. The only way to overcome the dealers' unwillingness to stock, is to make them understand exactly what your proposed campaign is going to do for them, so that they come to believe in it just as strongly

as you do, and so that they are willing to take the risk of an investment in order to secure their part of the profits that will accrue from the advertising you are putting out.

The Salesman's Place in the Campaign

But the preliminary steps in effective advertising involve not only considerations of the consumer and the dealer—different as these are—but also considerations of a third factor, namely the salesman. It is not enough that the latter be familiar in a general way with your impending campaign; he should know it minutely and in such a way as to be able to inspire his customer with enthusiasm for it as a means of developing trade for his store.

The use of the printed word is well enough and often serves its purpose in placing an advertised product before the trade, but it should not be forgotten that by far the most potent influence toward securing trade enthusiasm (next to actual demand itself) is the confidence inspired by the salesman in his contact with the trade. This being so, it is good policy to inform your salesmen about your plan, its purpose and the reason for each part of it. It is well to place him in a position to reason out for himself and for his (your) customers why you are doing this thing or that, and what is its relation to the prospect of future sales both with regard to the dealer and his (the salesman's) own sales record.

If this is done, the salesman will not be "talking from the book"; he will use his own thoughts and will explain with all the force of his own words, based upon information and conviction, just what his house is doing and why the proposition is safe and desirable for the buyer.

Such terms as "personal appeals," "reason-why," "class copy," etc., mean but little to the road-weary salesman just back from the firing line of the battle with competition and persuasion of skeptical buyers. He must have the matter put to him in the language of his craft, which is that of the seller—the man who has been there. Usually, one of the most difficult things in the sales manager's work is to convince the salesmen in the field that the man in the home office really knows anything of what they are up against in their daily work.

In order that this result may be accomplished in the most satisfactory manner, the necessary effort should be put forth simultaneously with the trade journal campaign, the circular work and, if possible, with the preliminary steps of the selling campaign itself. These activities necessitate a close interlocking of the sales and advertising details and call for team work of a high order. Their successful performance measures the quality of generalship exercised in the conduct of the composite "sales" and "advertising" campaign. And good generalship in this case means efficiency, distribution and continuous profits.

Careful Scheduling

It is important that both the selling and the advertising should be scheduled carefully in advance. The selling efforts should be timed in such a manner as to cover the territory to a sufficient extent before the advertising is begun, so as to permit the stimulation of dealers and other distributing channels. Check progress carefully and increase distribution to a point of safety, before beginning to advertise.

In placing the advertising, it is desirable to time it sufficiently in advance to give opportunity for overcoming the usual inertia on the part of the consumer, permit the creation of the necessary consumer interest and the manifestation of buying activity at the time when the consumer demand normally should begin to move the dealers' stocks. If this is correctly calculated, it serves as a demonstration to the trade of the correctness of your claims and the soundness of your sales methods. No matter how skeptical a dealer may have been in the beginning, if he witnesses a successful carrying out of a plan, the details of which he was made familiar with months before, he will invariably change his attitude and in most cases become a staunch supporter of the plan, the soundness of which he formerly questioned or perhaps even denied.

As the composite campaign progresses, territory should be carefully re-worked and re-checked.

This will serve to locate the slow-moving dealers' stocks and will enable the manufacturer to take the necessary steps to introduce consumer-stimulating methods of a kind that will help move the dealers' stocks. If the re-checking of territory demonstrates that in certain sections the advertising fails to produce expected results, opportunity is afforded for additional effort of a local character, unless it should be found that the campaign itself needs to be changed.

Protecting the Dealer

Every manufacturer or distributor who would build up a permanent business, must protect his dealers. The old idea of "loading 'em up" has given place to the idea of service and cooperation. The sale of goods to a dealer should be regarded by the seller as a liability that will not have been discharged until the goods have been moved along to the consumer. Remember that "the man who stuck the dealer died poor."

Some manufacturers live in constant fear lest their plans should become known to their competitors. This fear is largely groundless. The imitator, if such there be, really boosts the business of the man he imitates. The really dangerous competitor does not imitate: he initiates. Beware of him.

If the campaign and all its elements are thus considered carefully in advance, the resulting advertising can hardly fail to be effective.

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